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ABSTRACT

American family life is being transformed by both parents increasingly becoming employed. This change has created a need for strategies to assist single-parent and two-paycheck families. Two-paycheck families present problems to clinical psychologists. External demands on these families include the demands of the workplace, children's needs, the needs of aging parents, and household responsibilities. Internal difficulties include guilt, anxiety, alienation, powerlessness, rigidity, anger, and competition. Four factors characterize successful two-paycheck couples: commitment, control, confidence, and cooperation. Commitment involves believing in the choices that you make about how to live your life, and seeing your life as meaningful. Building a sense of commitment involves seing the world as interesting and benign. Control involves experiencing yourself as ultimately responsible for the shape of your life. Enhancing a sense of control requires recognizing how personal choices dictate outcomes. Confidence is the ability to see changes as developmental opportunities, rather than as a threat to security. Increasing confidence involves recognizing one's potential for coping and becoming more future and change oriented. Cooperation involves a mutual approach to solving problems, grounded in an awareness of and respect for others' needs. Increasing the level of cooperation within a family requires a climate of trust and caring. Two-paycheck families are not perfect, but their choices can facilitate the growth and development of all family members in a manner which more closely approximates fairness to all. (ABL)

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Two-Paycheck Families:

Techniques to Ease the Strains and Build the Strengths

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1989

Presented at the Fifth Eastern Symposium on Building Family Strengths, March 1989, Pennsylvania State University

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I

Introduction

American family life is being transformed by the fact that, increasingly, both parents are employed. Two-paycheck families are fast becoming the norm. The traditional family, with the sole-breadwinner father and the "at home" mother, is rapidly vanishing; it is estimated that by next year, less than 15% of American households will live in this family pattern. Between 1960 and 1985, there was a 256% increase in the number of working mothers with children under the age of six. In the U.S. today, over half of all new mothers return to work within the first six months. Most of our lives are being touched, directly or indirectly, by this growing trend. You yourself might be part of a single-parent or a two-paycheck family, or perhaps your grown children are pursuing this lifestyle. Your neighbors and colleagues at work almost certainly include examples.

The skyrocketing acceleration of mothers' participation in the workplace is changing the lives of millions of wives, husbands, and children. These striking changes have created a pressing need for strategies to assist single-parent families and those with two employed parents. Although in the near future, hopefully we will see broad institutional reforms which will help to address the new problems of these families more fully, at the present time, most individuals pursuing the two-paycheck lifestyle are eager to learn how to cope more effectively with various common sources of conflict. We strongly feel that it is important to help these families learn how to explore the rich potential of their chosen lifestyle. We've found that helping them requires an understanding of their conflicts and stressors, and the application of appropriately conceived interventions.

Two-paycheck families and the problems they face have been of considerable interest to us, both personally and professionally. In our work as clinical psychologists, the majority of our clients are struggling in one way or another with this social trend... either struggling to make their own two worker household function more smoothly, or struggling to affirm and validate their decision to pursue a "traditional" marriage where the wife does not work outside the home. We've found that helping these families cope more effectively with the stressors they commonly encounter, and thereby allowing their continued pursuit of the dual-earner lifestyle, has been both challenging and extremely rewarding.

Today, we'd like to discuss a package of therapeutic techniques that have been specifically designed to help members of two-paycheck families learn how to better reap

the benefits and dodge the drawbacks of their lifestyle. It is based on a conceptualization of the two-paycheck family situation as one which offers considerable opportunity for family members' growth and satisfaction, provided that parents and children are skilled in dealing constructively with the stresses this lifestyle commonly entails. Today, we'll examine some strategies that have helped parents who are striving to balance dual commitments to family and the workplace. This approach is based on a combination of research and clinical findings, derived from over ten years of work with two-paycheck families. In previous years, we've emphasized theory in our presentations about two-job families. Today we'll focus more on a practical, applied, "how-to" approach. The objective of these helping techniques is to make the dual earner lifestyle function more optimally for all family members.

II
Sources of Dual Earner Family Distress

For starters, we need to clarify the problems we're trying to address. Two-paycheck couples, especially those with young children, frequently feel overwhelmed by their lifestyle... regardless of whether both parents are pursuing freely chosen careers or working out of sheer economic necessity. It's helpful to differentiate between the two general sources of their distress, internal and external.

External and Internal Sources of Difficulty

The external demands of the workplace, children's needs, aging parents' needs, and household responsibilities compete for limited time, creating obvious stress on the dual earner couple. Unfortunately, the workplace has been slow to accommodate the needs of two-paycheck families. Inflexible and overly demanding work schedules are common. Many employees also must deal with excessive and unpredictable travel and relocation demands. Parents struggle with problems caused by insufficient and inadequate day care facilities for infants and preschoolers, a lack of afterschool programs for older children, and deficient provisions for the care of sick children and elderly family members. Erratic school and recreation program schedules and inadequate school transportation mechanisms further complicate the lives of two-paycheck parents.

Although these external sources of difficulty are certainly real, we think it is important to understand that they are compounded by equally problematic internal, psychological sources of difficulty. Guilt, anxiety, alienation, powerlessness, rigidity, anger, and competition are common obstacles to success and satisfaction for two-paycheck couples. These inner psychological barriers are the problems we'll be focusing on today. The fact that these internal conflicts are usually present to one degree or another should not be surprising; today's generation of two-paycheck partners was generally socialized to accept traditional roles, lack the benefit of successful role models, and find themselves embedded in a social context which is often critical of and challenging toward their lifestyle. No wonder internal conflict is the rule! For many, these internal issues interfere with the ability to find solutions to the pressing external problems; internal conflicts make people more vulnerable to stressful external demands and less efficient in solving problems. Confronting and resolving salient internal conflicts about the two-paycheck lifestyle, can help parents cope much more successfully with what initially seemed to be overwhelming outside obstacles.

In practice, we have found that the external and internal sources of difficulty are often mutually exacerbating, because failure to cope with external demands reinforces the internal problems. For example, difficulty in locating appropriate child care (an external problem) may fuel fears that a mother's working outside the home is "wrong" and "damaging" (an internal problem). As a result, improvement requires changing this ongoing interplay between the external and internal problems. To do this, it's crucial for couples to address both sources of difficulty. In treatment, for example, it's often necessary to provide concrete suggestions on how to meet external demands more successfully, and to assist couples in solving specific

problems, before the internal issues can be fully addressed. In the short run this is often needed to keep the family intact; it helps to "buy time" to work on the internal barriers. However, for long term satisfaction with this lifestyle, it is imperative to address the central internal, psychological obstacles as well. Our focus here is on several techniques aimed at fostering internal stress-resistance in two-paycheck parents.

III
The Importance of Stress Resistance
The Four C's: Correlates of Success

Well, so what works? For the past several years we've been sharing a helping model with other professionals, which many find useful in organizing their interventions with two-paycheck families. Work with two-paycheck couples strongly suggests that four common elements characterize the most successful relationships and seem to contribute to a couple's hardiness or ability to cope with the high level of external stressors they often encounter. Apparently these qualities permit people to prosper in hectic, pressured, demanding environments, which might otherwise be expected to set the stage for exhaustion or physical illness.

We've found that considering the four factors that characterize successful two-paycheck couples provides a framework for helping other couples cope more effectively. Making couples aware of these four factors can help them become more stress resistant, and can help them to equip their children with beneficial coping skills as well.

For mnuemonic ease, we've labeled these qualities:

Commitment
Control
Confidence
Cooperation

COMMITMENT

Commitment to self, work, family and other important values. It involves believing in the choices that you make about how to live your life, and seeing your life as meaningful. Commitment is the opposite of alienation.

CONTROL

A sense of personal control over one's life. Experiencing yourself as ultimately responsible for the shape of your life. The opposite is powerlessness or helplessness.

CONFIDENCE

The ability to perceive oneself as competent and see change in one's life as a challenge to master. The ability to see changes as developmental opportunities, rather than as threats to security.

COOPERATION

A mutual approach to solving problems, grounded in an awareness of and respect for others' needs. This includes a recognition of the fact that our lives are necessarily interdependent, and that it's impossible for anyone to "do it all" alone.

IV
Helping Strategies

These four factors, 1) commitment, 2) control, 3) confidence, and 4) cooperation, then, appear to characterize successful dual earner couples. Several types of interventions can be used to assist two-paycheck family members achieve greater levels of stress-resistance. When problems and conflicts exist to a significant degree, we have found that enhancing these characteristics can help two-paycheck families cope with the stresses of their lifestyle and achieve the balanced success they seek. The preventive model we emphasize aims at educating individuals about the potential problems and challenges that partners in dual earner relationships face. The purpose of this type of intervention is both consciousness-raising and skills-building.

The following are some of the techniques that have proven to be helpful to two-paycheck family members as they grapple with common conflicts and attempt to improve their capacity to tolerate stress. They are derived from several schools of counseling, but are most closely tied to the cognitive-behavioral and existential models of psychotherapy.

How to Build COMMITMENT
Methods for Change

Building a sense of COMMITMENT involves seeing the world as interesting and benign. It also requires clarifying your values and resolving ambivalence about lifestyle choices. Ambivalence and conflicting values make commitment difficult for many employed parents. Adherance to two sets of values that are incompatible creates stress and strain. For example, today, the importance placed on women's need for self-fulfillment and equality is often in sharp conflict with the widely espoused ideas that young children need a mother at home and that a husband's success depends on the continual availability of a supportive and nurturant spouse. These cultural realities set the stage for self doubt and guilt for many employed women and leave many husbands highly ambivalent about their wife's decision to work. For too long society has implied that wanting to combine parenting and employment is selfish, neglectful, and irresponsible. Parents who believe they can't make it all work, may create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Believing that juggling a job with young children is impossible, can prevent parents from thoroughly reviewing child care options and working to create more flexible work possibilities for themselves. Fathers with mixed feelings about maternal employment may look for evidence that the family or home is being "neglected", and may misinterpret all familial imperfections as stemming from their wife's employment. If a husband sees his wife as free to choose to work or stay at home, he may resent her for opting to have a job, fuel her own guilt, and convey to the children that they are being deprived by their selfish mother. This can create serious problems. On the other hand, if a husband sees his wife as working out of financial necessity, he may feel inadequate and resentful toward the "world", and communicate his helplessness and pessimism to the children, which also can have deletirious effects. Developing a strong commitment to this lifestyle enables its success. How can employed parents resolve the question of conflicting expectations in order to achieve and maintain this necessary, empowering commitment? The following steps have proven helpful for many:

1. The first step involves expanding your awareness of your current life situation. The process of focusing attention on the here-and-now leads to a heightened appreciation of your feelings in the present, and assists in clarifying both the positive and negative features of your daily life.

Ask yourself: Where are you now?
What are you experiencing?
What is "right" in your life?
What gives you satisfaction?
What gives you pride?
Next, what feels "wrong"?

What often makes you angry?
What often makes you hurt?

2. The second step is to develop a full sense of one's life choices. Many find it useful to engage in the following exercise designed to allow you to envision the possibilities your life offers by imagining all the alternatives available to you.

Explore your options:
How might you reconstruct your life?
Where else could you be?
How could things be worse?
What shifts would be necessary?
How could things be better?
What shifts would be necessary?

3. Values clarification is a powerful strategy for alleviating ambivalence and building commitment.

Engage in honest self appraisal, here.
Ask yourself:
What really matters to you?
What for you is truly important in life?
How do you measure you life's success?
What really counts?

Identify you personal values and then clarify your value system by ranking the importance of the various considerations that enter into your life decisions. What concerns are paramount? What do you most want from your life? How important are each of the following: things, relationships, respect, prestige, power, nurturance, affection, tranquility, responsibility, beauty, and equality. Obviously, there are no right or wrong answers. What do you really enjoy? What is worth knocking yourself out for? What would you like to be remembered for?

Now, share notes with your partner. Are your priorities congruent, or are there differences that should be discussed. As you try to understand one another's values perspective, listen carefully and try to repeat what you've heard back to your partner. This way your partner can correct any mistaken impressions, and allow you to grasp their view more accurately. An accepting stance is most helpful: you need to know what your partner really believes is important in life, and judging will just get in the way. After both partners have shared their views, and completed the process of reflection, look for any areas of "common ground". These shared values should assume a central place in your decision-making about your family.

Next, assess whether your daily use of your limited time and energy is consistant with the values system you've articulated for yourself. Do your choices reflect your

personal and your shared values appropriately? Are some concerns overly dominant to the exclusion of others? If so, where do the imbalances lie?

4. Use of cognitive techniques is often helpful. Think about how you think and what you privately say to yourself throughout a typical day. Does your internal dialogue undermine your commitment? When "the going gets rough", do you blame your troubles on the fact that you're in a two-paycheck family? While some of your frustrations probably are connected to the dual earner lifestyle, many times it's too easy to trick yourself into believing that life would be a breeze "if only" you or your wife weren't employed. Is this belief really accurate? Also, think about how your expectations of yourself and partner may undermine your commitment by making an already challenging circumstance nigh impossible. For example, perfectionism regarding housekeeping standards or unwillingness to make job-related compromises when children get sick, because one believes that coworkers will perceive one as lazy and incompetent, can make it even harder to make a two-paycheck family function smoothly.

Our emotional state is largely a function of how we choose to interpret what happens in life. For this reason, recognizing self-defeating cognitive patterns and changing them can be a powerful way of reducing our negative emotional reactions to stressful events.

Detect, examine, and challenge irrational beliefs that fuel doubt and guilt.
Can you really be everything to everyone?
Does the selfless martyr really help her family the most?
Does the workplace really demand total loyalty and perfection?

5. Network with peers to underscore the legitimacy of dual values and trying to break with traditionally segregated divisions of labor. Confirming that you are certainly not the only one feeling overwhelmed can reduce internalized blame and feelings of inadequacy. It's a good idea to intentionally seek out opportunities to meet with other two-paycheck parents. For example, meetings of parents whose children attend the same child care program can provide valuable chances to validate your family's choices and allay the feeling that your family alone is living this way. Building friendships with other dual earner parents helps to reinforce your convictions, and can also provide valuable sources of information about child care, etc.

Since time is scarce for most two-paycheck parents, it's a good idea to use magazines and newspaper articles to stay abreast of what your "two-paycheck peers" are doing to

make their lives easier. During periods when children's and job demands are at a peak, and there's too little opportunity to meet with friends, these "print surrogates" can be quite helpful. But try not to go too long without finding time to sit down with a real "flesh and blood" friend to commiserate, brainstorm, and celebrate your lifestyle.

6. Work collaboratively with other family members to clarify your communal sense of purpose. Try to develop a family consensus about how nurturing and income-generating responsibilities will be shared. Discuss your mutual goals and options, and try to explore alternatives imaginatively. It's especially important to uncover any hidden attitudes about employed women or nurturant, highly participative fathers that may be powerful barriers to family success. Be aware that husbands, parents, and in-laws that believe that employed women are necessarily damaging to their children, can seriously undermine a mother's ability to juggle multiple roles. Sometimes, open, nondefensive discussion can foster greater broadmindedness.

Becoming aware of a hidden prejudice can allow you to inspect, challenge, and discard it. We all occasionally fall prey to the conservative tendency to assume "things should be the way they've been before". Examining the illogic of this assumption that the past was best can help two-paycheck families feel better about their less traditional roles. Other times, when family members' biases are more entrenched, simply recognizing how these family dynamics are operating can make them less intrusive and less damaging. For example, being prepared for criticism from an in-law can reduce its sting a bit.

7. Stop torturing yourself with unrealistic fantasies! Don't engage in futile comparisons of fantasy and reality. For example, comparing your real life with its real frustrations (let's say, given your actual situation as an employed parent) with a fantasy ideal (for example, a vague romantic idea of how you would function without work obligations outside the home if you were given the chance or if you made that choice. Do you imagine that your children would be perfectly content superstars, day after day? Do you believe they'd never get sick? Do you imagine that you'd love them better or that they'd appreciate you more? Would fantastic foods grace your table at each meal, without anyone gaining excess weight?). Don't commit the error of idealizing full-time domesticity. Recognize the frustration associated with the homemaker role, which centers around work that is commonly unacknowledged ("Oh, you stopped working!"), invisible ("No, I don't notice anything different about the house...is something different?), unending (your efforts are consumed at every meal, undone each time a family member wears their clean clothes or walks on a vacuumed carpet), and often downright impossible

(keeping a spotless, organized, showcase home is totally incompatible with providing children unending opportunities for creative self-expression and free exploration and experimentation).

8. Keep informed about research findings on the effects of maternal employment on children, mothers, and fathers. Be an educated consumer of such information and recognize the limitations of particular studies which may be misleadingly presented in the media. Learn to recognize distorted, overly simplified conclusions when you encounter them. Consider research findings about how nontraditional families actually benefit their children. For example, children of employed mothers appear more sociable and independent, and learn how to deal with a broader support network. Daughters seem to be more self confident and ambitious. Sons are less sex role stereotyped.

Much research shows that, on balance, working outside the home is beneficial to women (both physically and psychologically). Wives with jobs also need to consider the heavy psychological price of staying at home. Because homemaking and childrearing are devalued in our society, women who aren't employed are prone to suffer low self esteem. They've been shown to be more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression, and usually seem to have less power in their marriages. The decision to stay at home usually has an adverse effect on the type of job a woman will have once the children are grown and she returns to the workplace. Since statistics suggest that most women today can expect to work at least 35 years, electing to stay home while children are young probably means a big eventual sacrifice in the workplace, in terms of both salary and prestige. Furthermore, women who take themselves out of the workplace run the risk of becoming displaced homemakers in the event of divorce. This role is one characterized by the "triple jeopardy" of needing to seek employment with age, being female, and being seen as inexperienced all working against the effort. In addition, studies show that more involved fathers enjoy advantage themselves, and foster various strengths in their children. A review of the evidence often makes it easier to remain committed to the dual earner alternative

9. If you are a mother who has an especiallly hard time buying the idea that working outside the home may be best for your family, and continue to saddle yourself with undue guilt and anxiety, it is sometimes useful to redirect your thoughts and consider the potentially harmful effects of your ambivalence and guilt (quite apart from any effects of your employment). Lack of parental commitment itself can be destructive to kids. One of the most compelling reasons for resolving maternal ambivalence toward being employed involves the possible negative effects of such conflict on

children and future relationships with children.

If you constantly question your choice to work outside the home and believe that your choice is systematically depriving your children of optimal quality nurturing, you might be setting the stage for some real problems down the line. Even if you don't directly communicate your conflict to your children, kids may still pick up on your anxiety, guilt, and ambivalence, and respond to them.

The belief that children "need" stay-at-home moms may operate as a self-fulfilling prophecy. If your children are implicitly encouraged to view your working as depriving them of valuable, irreplaceable care, they are likely to feel diminished by your actions and they may wrongly conclude later on that they were less loved as children.

For adults, the belief that one's mother didn't provide "enough" love in childhood can contribute to self-doubt, possibly lower self-esteem, and foster externalization of one's later problems in living. Believing that you were unloved, or not adequately loved as a child, can affect one's view of self, even if this belief is without any basis in fact. Assuming that you were not loved can permit the conclusion that you were inadequate, defective, or somehow unlovable, all of which foster self-doubt and diminish self-esteem. Viewing your childhood as marred by maternal employment might provide a handy source of blame for later problems and frustrations. Down the road, it might be all too convenient for some adult children of working mothers to attribute their personal failings to the "incomplete" and/or "irresponsible" mothering they received. Unless developmental mental health professionals reach a consensus and conclude that maternal employment does not uniformly damage young children, this issue is likely to become a future vehicle for "mother blaming" among clinicians. How many future clients will have their adjustment struggles traced to placement in infant day care, without sufficient justification? Unfortunately, the phenomenon of "mother blaming" is still very much alive in psychiatry and psychology, and probably will be slow to fade. Those who stridently (and possibly prematurely) oppose infant day care, are adding to the arsenal available to future clinicians in search of a plausible maternal blunder to blame. Any professionals who choose to interpret tomorrow's adults' problems as linked to their dual career family origins, will simply aggravate any tendency on the part of the adult children of working mothers to externalize their problems and feel psychologically scarred for life. Such a view might be expected to diminish these individuals' chances of making responsible choices that would aid problem-solving. Feeling placed at an early disadvantage, some of these adult children of working mothers might possibly accept any deficits they manifest.

It also might be instructive to imagine how such a retrospective view of one's childhood might affect the relationship with one's mother. Children raised by guilt-ridden, ambivalent mothers might recognize their parent's vulnerability to accusation and criticism about "bad mothering". Might children manipulate this in adolescence and adulthood in mutually destructive ways? You bet! It seems plausible to believe that much as some guilty mothers might overindulge their young children, later on these same mothers might be devastated by their children's suggestion that their choice to work "ruined their kids for life!" How such issues might alter the balance of power in this mother-adult child relationship is interesting to speculate. It seems unlikely that such parental blaming would facilitate mutually supportive relationships between mother and grown children.

An obvious way of avoiding the scenario described above is to make peace with your decision to work and to resolve unproductive feelings of guilt. Becoming and remaining committed to your goal of combining work and family obligations will help to avoid the potential problems sketched above. By resolving ambivalence a bit, you can reduce the likelihood of communicating potentially destructive messages to your children. A mother who has convinced herself that her children can truly prosper without her staying at home, one who feels her choice to work does not in any way imply less love for her children, will not inadvertently set the stage for later potentially destructive speculation on the part of her children. A woman who is committed to balancing mothering and work can convey the idea that this is what truly loving parents often must do for the mutual benefit of all.

10. Switch from evaluating and judging yourself to describing and accepting yourself. This makes it a whole lot easier to take full responsibility for your life. Admit that there is no singularly "right" way to live. Comparing yourself to others is usually self-defeating, especially because you never know "the whole story" of their private lives. Who knows how messy their closets are, how often they vacuum under their sofa, or how many times they "lose it" and scream at their loved ones. Nobody is perfect.

How to Build a Sense of CONTROL
Methods of Change

Enhancing your sense of CONTROL requires recognizing how your personal choices dictate outcomes.

1. Responsible decision-making begins with the formulation of goals and the development of specific plans of action to influence your life.

A. Set realistic expectations for yourself. Don't base your self esteem on being perfect...juggling career and family requires compromise. Shed dispensible household tasks. Relax housekeeping standards and create an efficiently cleanable home. Box and store knick knacks you don't notice or appreciate any more. Rooms will look less cluttered. If you love plants, stick to a few dramatic, large specimens instead of a zillion small plants scattered all over your home. In a pinch, during an especially busy period, try allowing yourself to "dust with darkness"...use dimmer switches to reduce lighting and thereby conceal the dust! Evaluate all new household and clothing purchases in terms of their future maintenance needs. Unless you really enjoy ironing, buy only fabrics that don't require it. Hanging things while still warm from the dryer does an amazingly good job of eliminating wrinkles. Don't create extra work by folding kids' shirts and sweater. Most are robust enough to be dumped into drawers or baskets on shelves.

B. Don't overemphasize unimportant details. Complete tasks and assignments in a reasonable way within a realistic timetable. Avoid perfectionism by (1) becoming aware of this tendency and (2) perspective-taking (i.e., does this detail make a big difference in the "grand scheme" of things?). For example, think about how your children's bathing rituals might be simplified. Many children don't really require all the washing they get. You might even find that less frequent bathing solves problems of dry skin!

2. Transform stressful events by recognizing your role in shaping your emotional response to them. Feelings originate in our interpretations of events, not in the events themselves. By changing our view of events, we can alter how we feel about them. This can increase your sense of personal powerfulness. Next time you find yourself being thrown by an unexpected "disaster", challenge yourself to prove rationally why this turn of events is so totally awful. Usually, upon reflection, you can see that a given occurrence doesn't truly signal the "end of the world". This realization tempers your emotional reaction, and makes it easier to find realistic ways of coping with the unexpected.

3. Develop an assertive behavioral style. This is necessary for setting limits and avoiding overextension. Practice saying no in a firm, nonapologetic voice when turning down an unreasonable demand.

4. Take charge of scheduling your time.

A. Organize your life by allowing adequate time for careful planning. Try to foresee periods of exceptional demands (e.g., holidays, tax deadlines, baseball season, or

whatever regularly puts your family to an unusual test), so you can prepare and budget time accordingly.

B. Make diligent use of household "to do" and shopping lists and other time management tools to keep abreast of projects. Instruct other family members in the use of communal, running shopping lists, so they become accustomed to noting whenever they use the last of some household product or food. Refuse to purchases items that aren't included on the list. Try keeping shopping lists on separate pieces of paper for each different type of store you need to visit. This eliminates the need to recopy parts of lists when they get lost on errands.

C. Use a Daily List to outline your specific tasks for the next workday. Complete this list at the end of each work day.

D. Focus- be where you are (home vs. work);
center on activites at hand.
Compartmentalize your life!
Don't worry about home while at work, and vice versa. Make more efficient use of your time by eliminating such distractions. Remind yourself that later, you'll be able to focus all of your energies on the other set of demands, if you finish the tasks at hand here.

E. Don't procrastinate. Recognize this "fear of failure" game as the waster of time it is. Examine why you may avoid testing your real abilities by delaying tasks until the last moment ("if I'd had the time, the job would be perfect, but I waited and so was rushed"). Do you use procrastination to make boring work more exciting? If so, how else could you add interest to your worklife?

5. Search for and create support systems to meet your needs. Delegate! Share responsibility! Learn how to ask for help effectively! Ironically, you'll feel more in control of your life if you learn how to depend on others a little bit. Trying to do it all alone is an unreasonable burden to place on yourself. In attempting to expand you support network, you might consider trying to develop a symbiotic relationship with members of a full-time homemaker family in the neighborhood. In building such a friendship, it is important to guard against your own defensiveness, in order to avoid sounding critical of the nonemployed mother's lifestyle. If you can learn to be accepting and supportive of the different paths you're taking in nurturing your families, you can explore various mutually beneficial ways of working together. The resources of employed and nonemployed women are often complementary: the mother with the career usually has more disposible income but very little free time, while the at-home mother has more unstructured time but no "money of her own". Making arrangements to offer a nonemployed mother a substantial

hourly wage in exchange for such things as sick child care, chauffeuring children to after-school activities, or admitting repairmen into your home while you're working, can be mutually advantageous. Myriad cooperative opportunities could be explored in such a relationship.

6. Use compensatory self improvement strategies to enhance your feelings of control when external realities are limiting you in other ways. Define an area of deficiency and embark on a personal growth program. Acquiring a new skill can help offset feelings of helplessness arising from other areas in your life. By reminding you of your potential to change your life, learning a new skill helps restore your general sense of control.

How to Build A Sense of CONFIDENCE
Methods of Change

Increasing your CONFIDENCE involves recognizing one's potential for coping and becoming more future and change oriented. Many people eagerly await a time when they'll "have it all together" and be able to sit back and "set the controls on automatic". They long for a day when they'll have mastered everything that's expected of them, so they can relax, because no new curves will ever be thrown their way. They fantasize about how happy they'd be if only life would be 100% predictable and known, and imagine that this would finally leave them feeling totally safe and secure. These yearnings make us very vulnerable to the inevitable ups and downs of real life, with its continual stream of unexpected events. Instead, we need to learn how to accept a certain amount of unanticipated change as the norm, and work to view this "given" more constructively. Seeing change and new demands as potential adventure requires an ability to tolerate risk and failure.

1. Address and change irrational beliefs that underlie fear of failure and avoidance of risk-taking. Do you feel you have to be perfectly competent in everything you do? Do you expect yourself to cope perfectly with every demand made of you? Do you think others expect this perfection from you? Do you expect perfection from others?

2. As you clarify your short term and long term goals, recognize the need for flexibility, and the alternative paths to achievement of your most valued long term objectives. Don't get stuck believing that everything must go according to your original plan. Accept the inevitability of surprise.

3. Accept the notion that total lack of stress is both boring and deadly. You want your life to change! View your life as a flowing process, rather than as a linear path to a

specific destination. Ask yourself how you would like to be remembered after death (for impersonal achievements or for a shared style of living and interacting, and facing challenges to grow and change).

4. Recall your major experiences with failure. Think about how you have been shaped by your failures. Learn to identify what you have learned from failure experiences. Notice how failure often stimulates more growth and development than success.

5. Create positive self-fulfilling prophecies. Expect the best. Reduce anticipatory anxiety and be careful not to sabotage your own communications by broadcasting expectations of disapppointment or criticism. Convey the notion that you're a capable adult, and others will respect you more.

How to Build COOPERATION
Methods of Change

Increasing the level of COOPERATION within a family requires a climate of trust and caring.

1. Establish patterns of open and direct communication. Develop self expression skills that allow family members to discover shared areas of interest or dissatisfaction. Sharing allows a family to function as a system that understands itself.

2. Develop family members' capacity for empathy. Reward children for careful listening and considering the viewpoints of others. Teach them how to view things from another's perspective by talking about how you imagine they feel in situations and sharing how different events make you feel. Listen attentively as they communicate their inner experiences, and ask questions to show them you want to understand what it feels like to be them. Resolving conflicts optimally requires mutual understanding and respect for another's viewpoint.

3. Explicitly recognize the value of compromise. Praise the discovery of mutually beneficial problem solutions. Explicitly label such answers to conflicts by saying something like: "Hey, that's a real Win-Win idea". This helps orient children to the idea of abandoning a strictly adversarial approach to problems with others. Discuss the value of working to the communal as well as the personal good. Temper competitiveness among members by encouraging children to measure themselves against their own, internal standards, rather than through comparisons with siblings. Make every effort to avoid comparing children, because doing so can be very damaging to family relationships for a very long time.

4. Develop a flexible method for sharing the family's work. Assess members' abilities and preferences on a periodic basis, in order to match persons and jobs appropriately, fairly, and kindly. Allow all members to participate actively in decision-making about task assignments. Occasionally review the entire household's division of labor as a family, with an emphasis on positive acknowledgement of responsible, successful performance of duties.

Since this seems to be such a major source of dissatisfaction among women, and since the ubiquitous complaint is that others "don't do their share", it's important to consider ways in which women may be unwittingly maintaining this unwanted status quo. Women need to thoughtfully consider their feelings about sharing their role as "household manager", and the control that comes with it. If having the power to set unilateral standards for cleanliness is very important, the trade-off usually comes in the form of greater responsibility for homemaking activities. Women need to decide if they really want to/need to be the ultimate authority on housekeeping, the principal organizer, and feel more personally responsible for the state of the household. Candid assessment may reveal compelling personal benefits that were previously unrecognized. In this case, on balance, the extra work is well worth it. If the traditional role is not attractive enough, the woman may feel freer to share all portions of it (including the components that are more intrinsically rewarding).

Rigid scorekeeping and pursuit of strict "equality" with regard to household chores is generally dissatisfying and tends to create family tension. Aiming for "equity in the long run" is generally more workable. And trying to empathize with male partners may help women be more patient. In some senses it probably is "easier" for women to take responsibility for many traditional cleaning chores because they've been socialized to feel good about doing so. In childhood, these activities were defined as "play" for girls, which may make them seem a bit less onerous later on. The reality is that while today's women were being prepared to run households by their playtime activities, today's men were being prepared for life in the major leagues. Whose education was more relevant to real life in the 80's?

Try to reconceptualize housework as a type of noncompetitive sport and treat it as a form of exercise. Try to see housework as a productive form of recreation!

5. Support traditions which enhance the family's sense of identity and specialness. Create a variety of shared memories and emphasize their importance with a concrete record (e.g., photos, saved calendar notations, films,

etc.). Special outings and shared travel excursions are particularly salient features of memory, and consequently should be a family priority.

6. Encourage members to see the family as a shared creation, for which all are equally responsible. Avoid having one parent seen as orchestrating family affairs and therefore "in charge" of the group and everyone's happiness within.

V
Conclusion

The first examples of two-paycheck couples typically conformed to traditional sex roles within the family. Husbands felt terrific about "allowing" their wives to work, but made few or no concessions in their own careers or in their contributions to household and family tasks.

As we near the 90's, it seems that more couples would like a more truly egalitarian lifestyle, one in which both husband and wife, each equally committed to family and work, aspire to integrate their two roles (parent and worker)... to view family and work as complementary, rather than adversarial segments of life experience.

Job and family involvement aren't easily combined, given the demands of today's competitive, inflexible workplace and the scarcity of childcare resources and the like, but with some effort, we think balance can be achieved... partners can sample the rich satisfactions of simultaneous involvement in nurturing and producing... and children can observe and learn how to achieve balance within their adult lives.

These two-paycheck families aren't perfect, but their choices can facilitate the growth and development of all family member in a manner which more closely approximates fairness to all, than that of many families restricted by limiting traditional sex roles. "Having it all" may be impossible...but "sharing it all" can feel mighty good.